

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
OES-07 DLOS-09 ACDA-12 IO-13 /102 W
-----081806 221030Z /11

R 220938Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6363
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 04607

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: JA KS PEPR PINS
SUBJECT: JAPAN-ROK RELATIONS -- KOREAN CONTINENTAL SHELF

REF: A. SEOUL 1934; B. TOKYO 3088; C. SEOUL 2208

SUMMARY: AT THIS POINT, IT APPEARS THAT KOREAN CONTINENTAL SHELF LEGISLATION WILL PASS IN THIS DIET SESSION, ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION PARTIES MAY ATTEMPT TO DRAG OUT PROCEEDINGS WITH FAMILIAR ANTI-ROK CRITICISM. END SUMMARY

1. WITH PASSAGE OF BUDGET, MOST POTENTIALLY CONTENTIOUS ISSUE NOW FACING DIET IS KOREAN CONTINENTAL SHELF IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION (WHICH REVISES VARIOUS DOMESTIC LAWS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT RATIFIED BY DIET LAST SPRING). UNTIL IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION IS PASSED, GOJ WILL BE UNABLE TO EXCHANGE INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION FOR AGREEMENT AND BILATERAL
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EXPLOITATION OF SHELF AREAS CANNOT BEGIN.

2. SOUTH KOREAN DIPLOMATS IN TOKYO HAVE BEEN BULLISH IN THEIR ASSESSMENT OF PROSPECTS FOR DIET PASSAGE OF SHELF LEGISLATION, (ALONG LINES SIMILAR TO ROK MOFA'S COMMENTS TO EMBASSY SEOUL, REF A). IN CONTRAST WITH THEIR VISIBLE ANXIETY DURING LAST APRING'S DIET BATTLE OVER

RATIFICATION OF BILATERAL AGREEMENT, LOCAL ROK EMBOFFS HAVE BEEN UNUSUALLY CONFIDENT IN RECENT WEEKS, ATTRIBUTING IMPROVED CHANCES FOR LEGISLATION'S PASSAGE TO TWO FACTORS:

-- MESSAGE CONVEYED BY SEOUL 9(AND PRESUMABLY WELL UNDERSTOOD BY ITS ALLIES IN LDP AND DSP) THAT ROK VIEWS PASSAGE THIS SPRING AS POLITICAL LITMUS TEST OF JAPANESE SINCERITY IN OVER-ALL BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, WITH THREAT OF SHARPLY NEGATIVE KOREAN REACTION TO ANY FURTHER DELAY.

-- ROK'S RELATIVE SUCCESS IN CULTIVATING FRIENDLY TIES WITH CENTRIST OPPOSITION PARTIES, REPORTEDLY RESULTING IN "COMMITMENTS" FROM NLC AND CGP NOT TO OPPOSE KOREAN CONTINENTAL SHELF LEGISLATION.

3. SOUTH KOREAN OPTIMISM HAS FOUND SOME ECHOES IN RECENT COMMENTS TO EMBOFFS FROM LDP AND DSP SOURCES. DSP DIET POLICY CHAIRMAN EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE DIET WOULD ACT FAVORABLY ON LEGISLATION, WHILE LDP DIET POLICY STAFFER, DESCRIBING HIS PARTY'S "FIRM INTENTION" TO PRESS LEGISLATION TO SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION, SUGGESTED LDP WOULD BE PREPARED TO EXTEND DIET BEYOND MAY 17 DEADLINE IN ORDER TO GAIN PASSAGE. (RECOGNIZING THAT LDP AND DSP HAD SUFFICIENT VOTES FOR EVENTUAL PASSAGE, SENIOR JSP DIET STRATEGIST ADMITTED THAT DELAY WAS JSP TACTIC AND FORCING LDP INTO EXTENSION WAS IN FACT JSP'S ULTIMATE CONFIDENTIAL

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OBJECTIVE).

4. SIMILARLY, YOMIURI JOURNALIST VOICED OPINION SHELF LEGISLATION WOULD PASS, OBSERVING THAT IN MARKED CONTRAST WITH LAST SPRING, WHEN KORE-RELATED ISSUES WERE PRIME HEADLINE MATERIAL, MEDIA ATTENTION WAS NOW FOCUSED ALMOST ENTIRELY ON ECONOMIC MATTERS AND JAPAN-CHINA RELATIONS. HE SUSPECTED THAT AS LONG AS MEDIA CHOSE TO DOWNPLAY STORY, LDP'S JOB IN PUSHING LEGISLATION THROUGH DIET WOULD BE MUCH EASIER.

5. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, MORE PESSIMISTIC VOICES. FONOFF NE ASIA DIVISION OFFICIALS, BY NATURE SENSITIVE TO POTENTIAL FOR CONTROVERSY OF ANY KOREAN ISSUE, HAVE RATED PRESENT ODDS AT ONLY 60/40 IN FAVOR OF PASSAGE, CAUTIONING THAT ANY SOUTH KOREAN EXPECTATIONS OF RELATIVELY ASSURED OR EASY PASSAGE WERE PREMATURE. THEY SUGGESTED THAT LOCAL ROK EMBASSY, UNDER PRESSURE FROM SEOUL, MIGHT WELL BE EXPECTING MORE FROM THEIR LOBBYING EFFORTS WITH NLC AND CGP THAN THOSE PARTIES WERE PRESENTLY PREPARED TO DELIVER. SIMILARLY, ALTHOUGH GOJ AND LDP RECOGNIZED DIPLOMATIC IMPORTANCE OF

SATISFYING SEOUL WITH LEGISLATION'S PASSAGE THIS SPRING,
FONOFF OFFICIALS WERE NEVERTHELESS CONCERNED OTHER
FACTORS, SUCH AS NEW REVELATIONS OF JAPAN-ROK SCANDALS OR
POSSIBLE DECISION TO HOLD EARLY ELECTION, MIGHT CAUSE
PRESENT DIET STRATEGY TO COME UNSTUCK.

6. COMMENT: AT THIS POINT, IT APPEARS THAT SHELF
LEGISLATION WILL PASS. IT MAY NOT, HOWEVER, BE QUICK OR
EASY JOB. SOCIALISTS HAVE MADE NO SECRET OF THEIR DESIRE
TO DRAG OUT PROCEEDINGS BY RAISING SEOUL SUBWAY SCANDAL AND
FAMILIAR ALLEGATIONS OF KCIA WRONG-DOING. RECENT PRESS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 04607

REPORTS SUGGEST THAT, MINDFUL OF THEIR OPPOSITION
CREDENTIALS, BOTH NCL AND CGP WILL ALSO TAKE AT LEAST
PUBLICLY NEGATIVE STANCE, USING OPPORTUNITY TO VOICE
STANDARD CRITICISMS OF ROK-LDP COLLUSION. IN SUM, ALTHOUGH
LEGISLATION'S SPONSORS MAY HAVE SUFFICIENT CLOUT FOR
EVENTUAL PASSAGE, ISSUE STILL HOLDS POTENTIAL FOR
CONSIDERABLE ACRIMONIOUS DEBATE WITHIN DIET. MANSFIELD

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